

~~-YALE COLLEGE-~~ DEMOCRATS

Testimony of
Jacob Wasserman

242 Elm Street, Suite B32E
New Haven, CT 06511

Legislative Coordinator,
Yale College Democrats

Ward One Co-Chair-Elect,
New Haven Democratic Town Committee

In favor: H.B. No. 5126

An Act Concerning an Agreement among the States to
Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote

My name is Jacob Wasserman, a proud Connecticut voter and current student at Yale University. In 2012, I traveled all over New Haven and Connecticut, asking people to get out and vote. Many people, though, asked me why they should bother voting in the presidential race. Connecticut is not a "swing state," they said, so their votes would not matter. That is why I am testifying to urge the General Assembly to pass H.B. No. 5126 and fulfill the imperative to add Connecticut to the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

In a fair democracy, one person should get one equal vote—a principle enshrined in Supreme Court decisions and civil rights law. Thus, no matter where we live, we should have the same say in electing our president. The outdated Electoral College has failed to reflect our country's choices time and time again, and it's time to replace it. A repeat of 2000 would be unfair to the voters of our state and our nation, who simply want their votes to count. An error rate of even once should be unacceptable for choosing the leader of the free world—let alone the four times the Electoral College has done so. Overall, using the popular vote to pick the president is simple, fair, and just common sense.

But national popular vote is not just a national issue. Since 2004, no presidential candidate has held a campaign event in Connecticut. This is not about ad dollars or campaign appearances, though—without a need to campaign here, presidential candidates are currently free to ignore our state and its concerns without electoral consequence. But by passing the National Popular Vote bill, candidates will focus less on so-called "swing states" and more on our own issues. A state like Connecticut will suddenly be on the national stage, and all those people I urged to vote will finally have a voice. For example, last year, the New Haven Board of Alders unanimously passed a resolution in support of national popular vote, demonstrating that the issue has meaning and support at the grass-roots, local level. The resolution is attached after my testimony.

Right now, many states, including Virginia and Wisconsin, have recently considered "vote rigging" plans that would manipulate the Electoral College. These efforts would award electoral votes based on unfairly drawn, gerrymandered congressional districts, instead of the statewide winner. For example, Pennsylvania, which voted 52% for Obama, would have given the President only 35% of its electoral vote. If this plan is unchecked, the will of the people won't be reflected and the candidate with the most votes won't be elected. If even some of these state efforts had been in effect in 2012, the Electoral College would have again failed to follow the majority of the nation's preferences. By passing national popular vote now, this catastrophe can be avoided and the Electoral College can be retired. As a young American, I want my vote to affect the future of the country, which can only happen if Connecticut passes this bill as soon as possible.



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

Sarah Eidelson
Aldерwoman, 1st Ward

Chair
Youth Services Committee

Member
Human Services Committee
Legislation Committee
Development Commission
Goffe Street Armory Planning Committee

25 High Street, Apt. 32
New Haven, CT 06510-2313

Telephone: (203)-645-7409
E-mail: WARD1@newhavenct.net

March 19, 2013

Hon. Toni Harp, Senator, D-10
Hon. Martin Looney, Senator, D-11
Hon. Patricia Dillon, Representative, D-92
Hon. Toni Edmonds-Walker, Representative, D-93
Hon. Gary Holder-Winfield, Representative, D-94
Hon. Juan Candelaria, Representative, D-95
Hon. Roland Lemar, Representative, D-96
Hon. Robert Megna, Representative, D-97
Hon. Louis P. Esposito, Jr., Representative, D-116

c/o Legislative Office Building Rms 3300 and 4112
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE BILL RESOLUTION PASSED BY BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives for New Haven,

I am writing to inform you that on March 4, 2013 the New Haven Board of Aldermen approved a resolution endorsing the National Popular Vote Bill and encouraging passage of the related legislation in Connecticut.

As you are aware, under the bill all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The presidential candidate with the most votes would always win and every vote would be equal.

Please find enclosed the legislation along with other pertinent documents. Please do not hesitate to contact us when this item is being considered so that we may lend our support.

Sincerely

SARAH EIDELSON
Ward 1, Alderwoman

Encl.

SE:yl.



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
BOARD OF ALDERMEN**

Sarah Eidelson
Alderwoman, 1st Ward

Chair
Youth Services Committee

Member
Human Services Committee
Legislation Committee
Development Commission
Goffe Street Armory Planning Committee

25 High Street, Apt. 32
New Haven, CT 06510-2313

Telephone: (203)-645-7409
E-mail: WARD1@newhavenct.net

February 26, 2013

The Honorable Jorge Perez, President
Board of Aldermen
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

RE: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE RESOLUTION BILL

Dear President Perez:

I respectfully submit to the Board of Aldermen for unanimous consent the attached resolution calling on the Connecticut General Assembly to enact the National Popular Vote bill. We're requesting unanimous consent because this item could be coming up for vote in the General Assembly this month.

It is my belief that the interests of the citizens of New Haven and the country as a whole are best served when all people can participate on an equal basis in the election of the President of the United States. Under the bill, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The presidential candidate with the most votes would always win and every vote would be equal under the National Popular Vote legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

SARAH EIDELSON
Ward 1, Alderwoman

SE:yl

RESOLUTION OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERMEN CALLING ON THE
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ENACT THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE
BILL

WHEREAS the interests of the citizens of New Haven and the country as a whole are best served when all people can participate on an equal basis in the election of the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS in the United States, every voter in every state ought to matter in every presidential election; and

WHEREAS the ideal of "one person, one vote" is central to American representative democracy; and

WHEREAS the natural extension of this ideal is that the candidate who receives the most votes in all fifty states should be elected President and should never lose to a candidate with fewer votes; and

WHEREAS Article II, Section 1 of the United States Constitution gives exclusive power to the states to award their electoral votes to the Electoral College in a manner of their choosing; and

WHEREAS the use by 48 states, including Connecticut, of the winner-take-all rule, whereby the candidate who gets the most votes within a state receives all of the state's electoral votes, is the cause of serious problems in the current system of electing the President; and

WHEREAS one such problem is that candidates for the Presidency lack an incentive to compete in any state that they are sure to win or sure to lose, and instead campaign exclusively in a small number of "battleground states" where the outcome is uncertain; and

WHEREAS in 2012 it was widely acknowledged that there were only seven to nine politically relevant "battleground states" in play, and Connecticut was not among them; and

WHEREAS in 2008 and 2004, 98% of all campaign resources went to just 15 states, and two-thirds of all campaign resources went to just six states and Connecticut was not among them; and

WHEREAS Connecticut residents do not receive the attention they deserve from presidential candidates; and

WHEREAS this is detrimental to voter turnout and engagement; and

WHEREAS people of color are statistically underrepresented in the 13 most competitive states; and

WHEREAS another problem of the current system is that the candidate who received the most votes in all fifty states did not become president in 4 out of 56 presidential elections, including the 2000 election; and

WHEREAS Connecticut, like most other states, has several times exercised the right to change laws concerning suffrage in presidential elections as well as its rules for awarding electoral votes; and

WHEREAS Connecticut has the power to change the winner-take-all state law, and may join other states in enacting the National Popular Vote bill, which would guarantee the Presidency to the winner of the national popular vote; and

WHEREAS under National Popular Vote legislation, the presidential candidate with the most votes would always win; and

WHEREAS under National Popular Vote legislation, every vote would be equal; and

WHEREAS under National Popular Vote legislation, candidates would have an incentive to compete in all fifty states, including Connecticut;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the New Haven Board of Aldermen supports National Popular Vote state legislation joining Connecticut in an interstate compact to guarantee the Presidency to the winner of the national popular vote. Under the bill, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes in the Electoral College; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Connecticut General Assembly be urged to enact the National Popular Vote bill in the 2013 legislative session.